(a) whether it is a fact that Government has plans to introduce a National Integrated Directory Enquiry Service (NIDQS) for mobile and fixed lines that envisages a separate access code for local directory enquiry service and national directory enquiry service and yellow pages for subscribers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) In the new plan, access code for local/national directory enquiry has been proposed as below:

The access code will be 1ABLX,

Where 1AB is code for service access

L = 0 National Directory Enquiry/Yellow Pages Enquiry

= 1 Local Enquiry

X is Operator code for National Directory Enquiry Service Provider.

India's tele-density

1112. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's tele-density is just over 20 per cent and only 60 per cent of the population have access to a telephone;

(b) whether a good amount of money is idling in USO kitty and if it is pumped back into the telecom sector, it can address the urban-rural divide to a large extent;

(c) if so, the details of such amount so lying idle; and

(d) the action plan of Government to address this issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) No, Sir. The tele-density in India as on 31st October 2008 stands at 31.50% with 363.95 million total telephone subscribers in the country, As fer as access to a telephone is concerned, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has provided telephone facility in 624 district head-quarters (DHQs), 1733 sub-divisional head-quarters (SDHQs), 2806 tehsil head-quarters (THQs), 6169 block head-quarters (BHQs) and 5,21,911 villages out of 624 DHQs, 1735 SDHQs, 2827 THQs, 6180 BHQs and 5,93,601 villages respectively, as on 31.08.2008.

(b) to (d) The resources for meeting the Universal Service Obligation are generated through a Universal Service Levy (USL) which is a percentage of the revenue earned by the telecom service providers under various licenses. Credits to the Universal Obligation Fund (USOF) are through parliamentary approvals. No fund allotted to USOF is laying unutilized since the inception of the fund on 01.04.2002. As on 31.03.2008, a cumulative amount of Rs.6371 crores have been allocated to USOF and disbursed by it towards rural telecommunications under various schemes.

As per Departmental figures, the collection of USL net of USOF subsidy disbursement was Rs. 14,033 crore as on 31.03.2008. Out of this, Rs. 2000 crore has been approved by the Parliament for allocation to the USO Fund for 2008-09 under the Budget Allotment 2008-09.

This amount is being utilized to support various schemes such as provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs), Rural Community Phones (RCPs), Rural Household Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs), setting up and managing infrastructure sites (towers) in 500 districts spread over 27 states for provision of mobile services in the specified rural and remote areas, where there is no existing fixed wireless or mobile coverage, Broadband connectivity for rural areas, creation of Optical Fiber network in rural and remote areas.

NLCPR Schemes

1113. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the project sanctioned by Government in the north-eastern States under NLCPR schemes in the years 2005- 06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 with the names of the States;

(b) the amount sanctioned and disbursed against each of the projects as mentioned in reply to part (a) above;

(c) the Status of the projects in respect of their completion till date; and

(d) the reasons where the projects have not been completed as per schedule?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The State-wise details of projects sanctioned for funding under Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) during 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 is available on this Ministry's *website* ***www.mdoner.gov.in*** under the head "NLCPR" and State-wise they can be seen under sub-head "e. Sanctioned Projects".

(b) and (c) The State-wise and project-wise details of amount sanctioned, released and the status of completion of all the projects sanctioned under NLCPR, including the projects sanctioned during 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 is also available on Ministry's *website* ***www.mdoner.gov.in*** under the head "NLCPR" and State-wise they can be seen under sub-head "a. NLCPR Projects".

(d) The reasons where the projects have not been completed as per schedule include, *inter-alia*, shorter working period because of long rainy season in the North East, delay on the